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TAGS: [FR](#) [SP](#) [UK](#) [PHUM](#) [UNGA](#) [AORC](#)
SUBJECT: HANDICAPPING UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL ELECTIONS

REF: SECSTATE 49110

Classified By: Ambassador Khalilzad for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (U) Action requested: please see paragraph 5.

[1](#)2. (C) In our view, Japan, South Korea and Pakistan are likely to prevail in the May 21 General Assembly elections to the Human Rights Council. All have the benefit of incumbency. Pakistan's UN Mission tells us the OIC (56 or 57 votes) has endorsed both their candidacy and Bahrain's. This endorsement, combined with Pakistan's recent accession to some human rights instruments, has Pakistan feeling confident. Moreover, international NGOs like Human Rights Watch and the Democracy Coalition Project, which earlier opposed Pakistan, have backed off, apparently at the request of their Pakistani affiliates. South Korea may benefit from Ban-Ki-moon's position as Secretary-General. All our assessments are necessarily speculative, as countries are reluctant to reveal their voting preferences.

[1](#)3. (C) As for Bahrain, Sri Lanka, and Timor-Leste, it is difficult to assess their chances. Bahrain's OIC support is mentioned above. Timor has campaigned hard (their Ambassador says he has met with over 180 permreps) and has strong support in the WEOG, but may lose votes in other groups due to opposition from Indonesia, and the perception that Timor lacks the capacity, particularly in Geneva, to participate fully in the HRC. If we want to help Timor, we may have to address the capacity issue. We could perhaps also speak quietly to Indonesia. NGOs are campaigning hard against Sri Lanka, which is also campaigning hard, however, emphasizing its "active role in the institution-building process of the Council" as Chair of the Asian Group for two years and calling itself one of the oldest democracies in the region (to counter Timor-Leste).

[1](#)4. (C) In the WEOG, the race is too close to call. France and Spain have been campaigning longer than the UK and may be trading favors, as reftel reports and the UK suspects; but the UK may have the advantage of incumbency. The UK Mission would welcome U.S. lobbying on its behalf and says its Embassy in Washington has given the Department a list of about a dozen Member States to be approached.

[1](#)5. (C) Action request: In the Eastern European Group, where Serbia, Slovakia and Ukraine are running for the seats being vacated by Ukraine and Romania, we would be grateful for the Department's guidance on which two countries to support.
Khalilzad